



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) Issuance and Academic Technology Assurance Scheme (ATAS) Policy

Version Number 10.0

**Effective for all applicants and students applying to the University of
Salford from 1 August 2026**

Author: Head of Home Office Compliance

Home Office Compliance Team

Document Control Information			
Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised & Date
Richard Melia	Update to when the University will not issue a CAS	V10.0	SHRAC – Chair’s Action 17/09/26
Richard Melia	Update to changes when new ATAS required	V9.0	June 2025
Richard Melia	<i>Grammatical updates to policy</i>	V8.0	August 2023
Richard Melia	<i>Updated CAH3 codes relevant to ATAS; general updates to policy</i>	V7.0	July 2022
Richard Melia	<i>Updated to include EU/EEA/Swiss nationals and exemptions to ATAS clearance</i>	V6.0	October 2021
Richard Melia	<i>Updated terminology from Tier 4 to Student (Route); leave to remain to permission to stay</i>	V5.0	October 2020
Richard Melia	<i>Grammatical changes</i>	V4.0	N/A
Richard Melia	<i>Updated ATAS requirements</i>	V3.0	ASQAC, May 2019
Richard Melia	<i>Updated ATAS requirements from JACS codes to CAH3 codes</i>	V2.0	Home Office Compliance Assurance Group.
Michelle Wilson and Richard Melia	<i>Policy on CAS issuance and ATAS clearance documented for Home Office Compliance Assurance Group</i>	V1.0	Home Office Compliance Assurance Group 19/01/2017; ASQAC 29/03/2017.
Policy Management and Responsibilities:			
Owner:		This Policy is issued by the Head of Home Office Compliance, who have the authority to issue and communicate policy on Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) issuance and the management of the Academic Technology Assurance Scheme (ATAS) and have delegated day to day management and communication of the policy to the Home Office Compliance Team.	

Document Control Information	
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy: Authorising Officer Key Contact (Head of Home Office Compliance) Marketing, Admissions and Student Recruitment Academic Registry Home Office Compliance Assurance Group
Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:	
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	1. <i>This is mandatory. 24 February 2017 – no amends made. Email the completed EA to Equality@salford.ac.uk</i>
Legal implications (LPG)	2. <i>N/A</i>
Information Governance (LPG)	3. <i>N/A</i>
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. <i>N/A</i>
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5. <i>June 2026 - reviewed by Head of Home Office Compliance</i>
Consultation:	
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	1. <i>N/A</i>
Review:	
Review due:	August 2027
Document location:	Academic Handbook page
https://www.salford.ac.uk/governance-and-management/academic-handbook	
The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.	

Purpose

This document sets out the University's policy regarding the sponsorship of non-UK, non-Irish applicants and students requiring a Student visa. This policy is specific to the University of Salford and does not represent a full statement of immigration or Student sponsor requirements. This policy is subject to change and the University is entitled to revise its policies or procedures relating to compliance with its Student Route sponsor duties at any time to reflect government requirements. The Immigration Rules and Student Route guidance will always supersede and override the content of this policy. The University is under no legal obligation to sponsor any individual and exercises caution with respect to issuing a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to not risk its status as a Student Route sponsor.

Scope

This document relates to all non-UK, non-Irish applicants/ students who apply/ study with the University of Salford. Those applicants/ students issued with a CAS are expected to study at the University of Salford as a Student Route visa holder under the University's sponsor licence. Any international applicant/ student studying a course requiring Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance will have time-limited leave to remain in the UK, although this may not specifically be Student leave.

1. Key Responsibilities

Responsibility for the management and implementation of this policy and any accompanying procedures lies with the institution's Authorising Officer, with the assistance of the Home Office Compliance Team, Admissions and International Recruitment. All staff working with applicants and students covered by the Points-based immigration system must ensure the policy is adhered to accordingly.

2. Student Route Sponsorship and CAS Assignment

2.1. The Home Office Compliance Team is responsible for assigning CAS to applicants starting a new course at the University as well as existing students switching into the Student Route during their studies or extending their permission to stay in order to complete a course.

2.2. The University will only assign a CAS to an applicant if they have met all the conditions of their offer; the entry requirements of the course for which they are applying; as well as the conditions of this policy.

2.3. CAS will be assigned no more than six months prior to the course start date for any applicant commencing studies at the University. For example, CAS will be assigned no earlier than March for any courses beginning in September. For continuing students, CAS will be assigned no more than three months prior to a student's current visa expiry date.

2.4. The University will make appropriate checks to ensure any applicant or student already in the UK has valid permission to be in the country prior to issuing a CAS. This may include an Immigration History Check conducted through UKVI. If it is found that an applicant or student does not have valid permission to stay in the UK then the University will not issue a CAS. The University may request 'exit' evidence from individuals to ensure they are no longer in the UK (such as a boarding pass or entry stamp in their passport).

2.5. The University may make any additional checks it deems necessary to ensure it only sponsors genuine applicants or students who will successfully obtain a visa. These checks may include, but are not limited to, conducting an immigration history check via the Home Office, reviewing bank statements and financial documents, an interview, or requesting a copy of a previous CAS from former institutions.

2.6. The University will not sponsor applicants or students in the following situations:

- The course the applicant or student intends to study will not comply with Student visa requirements;
- There is any reason to believe an applicant or student will not comply with the conditions of their Student leave (e.g. an intention to work full-time or past history of working more than 20 hours per week) or if a student is in breach of their visa conditions;
- An applicant or student has submitted documents which are proven or suspected to be fraudulent;
- An applicant or student has outstanding tuition and accommodation fee debts with the University and the University has concerns about the student's ability to pay tuition and accommodation fees;
- The duration of an applicant's or student's course will result in the applicant or student exceeding the maximum allowable time studying as a Student in the UK (undergraduate students only). Likewise, the University will not sponsor any

student wishing to extend their course if the extension would result in the student exceeding the maximum length of study allowable in the UK (undergraduate students only);

- The University believes sponsoring an applicant or student will put its sponsor licence at risk or has concerns about the applicant's or student's intention to study and genuineness. For example, if, during the application process, there are doubts around the authenticity of documentation or the genuineness of an individual during a mock credibility interview;
- The applicant or student has been refused a UK visa, or a visa for any other country, within the last five years due to credibility concerns. This information is self-declared by applicants as part of the application process and when applying for a CAS;
- An applicant will not arrive in time for the last date of acceptance/ arrival onto their course;
- The course does not represent academic progression in accordance with the Sponsor Guidance and Immigration Rules and section 4 of this policy;
- Where another type of visa application is pending. In such cases, the applicant/ student must wait for the outcome of that visa application before the University will decide whether to issue a CAS.

2.7. The University will only sponsor an applicant or student where it believes the visa application will be successful and reserves the right to not sponsor any applicant or student if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting otherwise, including:

- A history of visa refusals whether that is for a UK visa or any other country, particularly where credibility has been called into question;
- Insufficient maintenance funds;
- Criminal convictions or involvement with terrorist activity;
- Any behaviour or evidence which would lead the University to believe the student is not genuine or does not truly intend to study;
- Any evidence to suggest a student has broken immigration laws;
- The student has overstayed in the UK by more than 28 days;
- The student is in the UK and does not hold valid immigration permission to be in the country;

- The student's course does not represent academic progression;
- Poor English language ability;
- Outstanding debts to the NHS;
- It transpires that a student has provided false information, presented fraudulent documentation or omitted relevant information from their application that later comes to light.

2.8. The University will not normally sponsor an applicant or student who has overstayed in the UK by less than 28 days unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing the applicant or student from making an in-time application. The University applies a high threshold for what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' including:

- Serious illness which prevents the applicant or student or their representative from making an in-time application (supported by appropriate medical documentation);
- Travel or postal delays beyond the applicant's or student's control (e.g. an unforeseen postal strike or travel delays due to natural disaster or war);
- Inability to provide necessary documents due to unavoidable circumstances such as the Home Office being at fault of losing or delaying the return of documents;
- Obtaining 'exceptional assurance' if the student was unable to leave the UK due to issues concerning COVID-19 (evidence of which should be maintained despite the concession ending in 2022).

3. Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

3.1. Non-EEA international students (excluding nationals from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and the US) with time-limited leave to remain – whether that is on a Student Visa or not (and also students who may be classed other than 'full-time overseas' for fee-paying purposes) – applying to study certain subjects, knowledge of which could be used in programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) or their means of delivery, will need to request and be approved for an ATAS certificate before they can study in the UK. This certification is obtained from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

3.2. For taught courses at undergraduate level (where the undergraduate degree leads to a postgraduate qualification), an integrated master's undergraduate degree and a postgraduate taught level degree, the following [Common Aggregation Hierarchy \(CAH3\)](#) codes (from the [Higher Education Classification of Subjects \(HECoS\)](#) coding system) require ATAS clearance:

CAH10-03-07 - Materials Science

CAH07-01-01 - Physics (including Nuclear Physics)

CAH10-01-02 - Mechanical Engineering

CAH10-01-04 - Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering

CAH10-01-09 - Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering

CAH10-03-01 - Minerals Technology

CAH10-03-02 - Materials Technology

Please note that any undergraduate course that leads to an undergraduate qualification does not require ATAS.

3.3. For Masters of Research; PhD/ doctoral level qualifications and visiting researchers, there is a longer list of CAH3 codes requiring ATAS clearance. These are:

CAH02-02-01 - Pharmacology

CAH02-02-02 - Toxicology

CAH02-02-03 - Pharmacy

CAH10-01-06 - Bioengineering, Medical and Biomedical Engineering

CAH03-01-02 - Biology (non-specific)

CAH03-01-03 - Ecology and Environmental Biology

CAH03-01-06 - Zoology

CAH03-01-04 - Microbiology and Cell Science

CAH03-01-05 - Plant Sciences

CAH10-03-05 - Biotechnology

CAH03-01-07 - Genetics

CAH02-05-03 - Biomedical Sciences (non-specific)

CAH03-01-08 - Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry

CAH03-01-01 - Biosciences (non-specific)

CAH03-01-10 - Others in Biological Sciences

CAH05-01-02 - Others in Veterinary Sciences

CAH06-01-02 - Agricultural sciences

CAH07-02-01 - Chemistry

CAH10-03-07 - Materials Science

CAH07-01-01 - Physics

CAH07-01-02 - Astronomy

CAH26-01-05 - Others in Geographical Studies

CAH07-04-01 - Physical Sciences (non-specific)

CAH07-04-03 - Sciences (non-specific)

CAH07-04-04 - Natural Sciences (non-specific)

CAH09-01-01 - Mathematics

CAH09-01-02 - Operational Research

CAH11-01-01 - Computer Science

CAH11-01-02 - Information Technology

CAH11-01-03 - Information Systems

CAH11-01-04 - Software Engineering

CAH11-01-05 - Artificial Intelligence

CAH10-01-01 - Engineering (non-specific)

CAH10-01-07 - Civil Engineering

CAH10-01-02 - Mechanical Engineering

CAH10-01-04 - Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering

CAH10-01-05 - Naval Architecture

CAH10-01-08 - Electrical and Electronic Engineering

CAH10-01-09 - Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering

CAH10-03-03 - Polymers and Textiles

CAH10-03-01 - Minerals Technology

3.4. Student Route sponsors have a duty to ensure that any student, including non-Student visa holders, obtain an ATAS clearance certificate before commencing study if they need one. Failure to do this could result in compliance action being taken against the University of Salford by UK Visas and Immigration.

3.5. An ATAS clearance certificate is issued for a specific course with a named provider and remains valid as long as the provider and/ or course details, including the length of the course, do not change. The student must apply for a new ATAS clearance certificate in any of the following circumstances:

- the course (or research) completion date is postponed for a period of more than three calendar months **and/ or** there are any changes to the course content (or research proposal). If the student is studying a PhD, changes include those other than minor changes to the areas of research or to the use of any new research technique;
- the student's primary supervisor changes;
- the student applies for further permission to stay in order to continue on their course;
- the student wishes to start a new course that requires ATAS clearance;
- the student moves to another institution; or
- the student's needs further permission to stay for writing up a thesis.

3.6. ATAS certificates are valid for six months and must be valid at the point the students' circumstances change as well as at the point they may need to extend their permission to stay (if applicable).

3.7. It should be noted that applications for ATAS clearance take approximately 20-30 working days, but can take longer during peak periods (e.g. the summer surge period).

3.8. Where ATAS clearance is required, the University will only issue a CAS once a copy of the ATAS clearance certificate has been sent to the University by the FCDO.

3.9. Where a student/ applicant is refused ATAS clearance, they will not be permitted to commence or continue on their chosen course of study or offered a place on another

course that does not require ATAS clearance (including those delivered by distance learning).

4. Academic Progression

The University will only sponsor applicants or students who meet UKVI's definition of 'academic progression' as set out in the Immigration Rules and Student Sponsor Guidance. In short, this rule requires students already in the country on a Student visa to prove their next course represents a genuine academic step up. A student must normally move to a higher qualification level and have successfully completed their previous course to qualify for a new CAS if they have previously studied in the UK. If the Head of Admissions or Head of Home Office Compliance do not consider academic progression can be justified then the University will not issue a CAS.

5. Length of Sponsorship

5.1. The University will sponsor a student for the duration of their course, subject to any compliance requirements of the University or UKVI which would result in sponsorship being withdrawn. The University may withdraw sponsorship if it is not necessary to continue sponsorship or if the University cannot fulfil its sponsor duties.

5.2. The course start date on the CAS will correspond with the date of registration in person on the course or induction, whichever is earlier.

5.3. The course end date on the CAS will correspond with the expected course end date of the proposed programme of study and is the date by which an applicant or student has completed all academic elements of the course including taught sessions; examinations; assessments; and writing/ submitting dissertations/ theses (unless these can be completed from outside the UK and there is no substantial reason to remain on campus).

5.4. The course end date for PhD courses will be four years from the course start date and covers the registration period where the student is undertaking full-time study as a registered student including any writing up period and continuation year.

6. Visa Refusals

- 6.1.** The University will only consider assigning one additional CAS following a visa refusal on maintenance grounds (i.e. on holding the required funds stipulated by UKVI to pay the balance of tuition fees outstanding and for living costs whilst studying in the UK) and only if the applicant or student can provide evidence to show there is minimal or no chance of their visa being refused a subsequent time.
- 6.2.** Further CAS will not be assigned where an applicant or student has had a visa refusal based on an error made by that student or applicant. If the error was made by an agent or representative, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.3.** Further CAS will not be assigned where an applicant or student has had a refusal due to failing a 'credibility' interview.
- 6.4.** Any applicant or student with a visa refusal will be reported to UKVI and any sponsorship will be withdrawn.
- 6.5.** Any applicant or student with a visa refusal who requests a new CAS must provide to the University all pages of their Home Office refusal notice.
- 6.6.** Provided the conditions of paragraph 6.1 are met, the University will issue one additional CAS to an applicant or student following a visa refusal. If a visa is refused a second time the University will not issue a further CAS.
- 6.7.** The University reserves the right to not issue a CAS to any applicant or student who has had their visa refused. Cf. Paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 above.

7. Terms and Conditions of Student Visa Sponsorship

All students sponsored by the University are expected to abide by the University's Terms and Conditions of Student Visa Sponsorship. The University reserves the right to withdraw sponsorship if it considers an applicant or student may be in breach of the Student Visa sponsorship terms and conditions.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains compliant with the Student Route Sponsor Guidance and Immigration Rules as well as good sector practice.